

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 DLOS-04 OES-03

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7235

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USCINCEUR

USCINCUSNAVEUR

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 6128

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP MR AG

SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF MOROCCO'S PRESSURES ON SPAIN IN THE
SAHARA AND PRESIDIOS

REF: MADRID 8583

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY MADRID FORESEES POSSIBILITY ONE DAY
OF COMPLEX SPANISH-MOROCCAN DISPUTE IN THE STRAITS, ALSO INVOLVING
THE UK, WHICH WOULD PLACE US IN DIFFICULT POSITION (REFTEL). FROM
RABAT PERSPECTIVE, WE WOULD JUDGE THAT KING HASSAN HAS PUT
MOROCCAN CLAIMS TO SPANISH ENCLAVES IN NORTHERN MOROCCO ON ICE
FOR PRESENT IN ORDER TO PURSUE POLICY OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH SPAIN,
WHICH CAN BENEFIT BOTH SIDES POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY. THIS
POLICY, IN OUR VIEW, IS BASED ON THE FURTHER SOUND LOGIC THAT
MOROCCO WILL HAVE ITS HANDS FULL ELSEWHERE, IN CONSOLIDATING ITS
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POSITION IN THE SAHARA AND IN FACING UP TO WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE

LONG-TERM HOSTILITY ON PART OF ALGERIA. KING'S APPROACH TO STRAITS, IN OUR READING, PLACES THE ISSUE IN CONTEXT OF LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENT OF SPANISH RELATIONS WITH THE UK AND WESTERN EUROPE LEADING TO AN EASING OF GIBRALTAR DISPUTE; MOROCCO, ALSO AT THAT POINT ENJOYING IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH SPAIN, WOULD IN TURN BENEFIT ON ENCLAVES. MEANWHILE, ENCLAVES ARE NOT A BURING PUBLIC ISSUE IN MOROCCO; KING IS MORE SUPREME THAN EVER IN CALLING FOREIGN POLICY SHOTS AND HAS ANY WOULD-BE REVANCHISTS FROM OPPOSITION PARTIES WELL IN HAND. IN LATTER CONNECTION, EVEN LEADERSHIP OF ISTIQLAL, WHICH KNOWN FOR ITS "GREATER MOROCCO" IDEOLOGY, TELLS US THAT THE PARTY VIEWS THE ENCLAVES ISSUE WITH NO RPT NO URGENCY AND INSTEAD ADVOCATES CLOSE COOPERATION WITH SPAIN. UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, THEREFORE, WE DO NOT SEE ANY IMMEDIATE CAUSE FOR CONCERN OR NEED FOR US ACTION VIS-A-VIS MOROCCO WITH RESPECT TO STRAITS AND ENCLAVES. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTTEL IS A THOUGHTFUL AND IMAGINATIVE LOOK AT US/SPANISH RELATIONS AS THEY MAY BE AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN'S RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO, PARTICULARLY MOROCCAN CLAIMS TO SPANISH ENCLAVES IN NORTHERN MOROCCO. THAT MESSAGE INTER ALIA SETS FOR TH SOME SCENARIOS KEYED TO CERTAIN ATTITUDES AND INTENTIONS ATTRIBUTED TO THE MOROCCANS. IT MAY THEREFORE BE USEFUL TO EXAMINE THESE INTENTIONS AND ATTITUDES FROM THE RABAT PERSPECTIVE.

3. VIABILITY OF MOROCCAN-SPANISH DETENTE. WHILE CURRENT DETENTE IN SPANISH-MOROCCAN RELATIONS MAY WELL ENTAIL SOME DEGREE OF EXPEDIENCY DICTATED BY MUTUAL NEED TO EASE OUT OF DIFFICULT SAHARA PLIGHT, KING HASSAN HAS BEEN PULLING OUT ALL STOPS TO SIGNAL THAT MOROCCO WISHES TO COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH SPAIN ACROSS THE BOARD IN FUTURE. KING HAS PERSONALLY SET TONE FOR DEFINITE PRO-SPANISH ATMOSPHERE BUILT UP FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION -- AFTER PAINFUL FALSE STARTS -- OF THE MADRID AGREEMENT. WE DO NOT SAY THAT THIS POLICY COULD NOT BECOME UNTRACKED, FOR AREAS OF POTENTIAL DISAGREEMENT RANGE FROM OUTSTANDING TERRITORIAL DIFFERENCES TO MORE IMMEDIATE ISSUES IN SAHARA TRANSITION OF BOU CRAA PHOSPHATE ENTERPRISE AND FISHING RIGHTS. ON LATTER TWO QUESTIONS, HOWEVER, AGREEMENTS IN PCINCIPLE APPARENTLY ALREADY EXIST AND IMPLEMENTATION IN CASE OF BOU RAA SEEMS SUCCESSFULLY UNDERWAY.

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4. KING'S EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR CLOSE RELATIONS WITH SPAIN APPEARS TO US TO BE BASED ON SOUND LOGIC: NOT ONLY DO SPAIN AND MOROCCO STAND TO BENEFIT POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY FROM MUTUAL REINFORCEMENT, BUT MOROCCO CLEARLY HAS ENOUGH PROBLEMS FOR THE PRESENT IN CONSOLIDATING ITS HOLD ON THE SAHARA AND FACING ALGERIAN HOSTILITY WHICH LIKELY TO PERSIST FOR EXTENDED PERIOD. KING, IN FACT, HAS FOR SOME TIME CONSIDERED ALGERIA

TO BE MOROINO'S PRIMARY FOE, AND, EVEN AT HEIGHT OF SAHARA TENSIONS, HAS TAKEN CONCILIATORY APPROACH TOWARD SPAIN.

5. ON INTERNAL SCENE, MEANWHILE, KING HAS BECOME MORE SUPREME THAN EVER IN CALLING THE SHOTS ON MOROCCO'S FOREIGN RELATIONS AND IN SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION, WITH THE LONG ATROPHYING OPPOSITION PARTIES VOICING THEIR VIEWS PUBLICLY ONLY AT KING'S PLEASURE. KING'S HOPE AND INDEED NEED FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH SPAIN WILL, OF COURSE, BE GOVERNED ALSO BY INTERNAL SPANISH DEVELOPMENTS, AND HOW THEY PERMIT SPANISH LEADERSHIP TO DEAL WITH UNRESOLVED CONTENTIOUS ISSUES IN RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO.

6. CEUTA AND MELILLA. MOST DETAILED AND EXPLICIT RECENT AIRING OF GOM VIEWS ON THIS MATTER WAS CONTAINED IN KING'S NOV 25 PRESS CONFERENCE (RABAT 5720). KING LINKED ANY FUTURE MOROCCAN CAMPAIGN ON THE ENCLAVES TO PROGRESS BY SPAIN IN PURSUIT OF GIBRALTAR CLAIMS. OUR INTERPRETATION OF HIS COMMENTS IS THAT HE HAS SET ASIDE FOR PRESENT BOTH NORTHERN ENCLAVES ISSUE AND ANY ACTIVE GOM SUPPORT OF THE SPANISH CLAIM TO GIBRALTAR. HE APPEARS TO HOPE AND EXPECT THAT SPANISH RELATIONS WITH THE UK AND WESTERN EUROPE WILL IMPROVE IN POST-FRANCO ERA AND WILL LEAD TO AN EASING OF THE GIBRALTAR DISPUTE. MOROCCO'S IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH SPAIN WOULD AT THAT POINT FOSTER A NEGOTIATED AMICABLE SETTLEMENT FOR NORTHERN ENCLAVES, ACCORDING TO THIS LOGIC. AS A SPANISH DIPLOMAT HERE REMARKED TO US FOLLOWING THE NOV. 25 PRESS CONFERENCE, (RABAT 5761), KING'S UNILATERAL LINKAGE OF GIBRALTAR ISSUE TO THE ENCLAVES COULD PROVE TROUBLESOME, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY AS SPANIARDS SEE PROGRESS ON GIBRALTAR AS LIKELY TO OUTPACE ENCLAVES ISSUE.

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7236
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RABAT 6128

7. AT THE SAME TIME, PRESIDIOS CANNOT, IN OUR VIEW, BE EXPECTED TO REMAIN ON ICE INDEFINITELY IN ABSENCE OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT. UNLIKE SAHARA ISSUE, MOROCCO HAS PRACTICALLY UNANIMOUS THIRD WORLD SUPPORT FOR ITS SOVEREIGN CLAIMS OVER THE ENCLAVES. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, A PRIMARY GOVERNING FACTOR OVER HOW HARD AND WHEN MOROCCO PUSHES SPAIN WILL PROBABLY BE THE DEGREE OF TENSION BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA, AND THE RELATED PACE OF MOROCCAN CONSOLIDATION OF SAHARA GAINS. OVERALL SPANISH-MOROCCAN BILATERAL RELATIONS WILL ALSO BE A MAJOR CONSIDERATION, AND IN THE SENSE THE ENCLAVES SHOULD CONSTITUTE AN INCENTIVE TO SPAIN TO PURSUE COOPERATION. AS FOR INTERNAL MOROCCAN POLITICAL PRESSURES, THE ONLY OPPOSITION PARTY TO DISPLAY ANY MAJOR DEGREE OF MILITANCY IN PAST OVER THE ENCLAVES HAS BEEN THE ISTIQLAL. WE UNDERSTAND PRIVATELY FROM THE ISTIQLAL LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, THAT THE PARTY DOES NOT CONSIDER THE ENCLAVES A MATTER OF ANY URGENCY, AND INSTEAD VIEWS
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GOOD RELATIONS WITH SPAIN AS AN OVERRIDING AIM. IN ANY CASE, NEITHER ISTIQLAL NOR ANY OF THE OTHER PARTIES--ALL OF WHICH CALL FOR MOROCCAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ENCLAVES--IS IN A POSITION TO CHALLENGE THE KING AT PRESENT ON THE QUESTION, NOR IS IT AT THE MOMENT A BURNING POPULAR ISSUE HERE. SHOULD A PARLIAMENT ACTUALLY BE SEATED NEXT FALL, WHICH IS QUESTIONABLE, THE ENCLAVES MIGHT FIND REVANCHIST EXPONENTS, BUT MOROCCO'S OTHER MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMS ARE LIKELY TO KEEP THE MATTER RELATIVELY SUBMERGED. FURTHERMORE, THE KING COULD ALSO BE EXPECTED TO KEEP THE LID ON PARLIAMENTARY EXCESSES AS LONG AS THIS SERVED HIS PURPOSE, SUPPORTED BY EFFECTIVE GOM CONTROLS ON THE OPPOSITION PRESS.

8. CANARIES. CANARIES HAVE BEEN A VERY LOW-KEY, ALMOST NON-EXISTENT ISSUE HERE. WE WOULD EXPECT GOM TO KEEP THIS ISSUE EVEN MORE QUIET THAN THE NORTHERN ENCLAVES IN INTEREST OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH SPAIN, AND, IN THIS SPIRIT, TO TRY TO AVOID CONFRONTATION CONCERNING TERRITORIAL WATERS INVOLVED. ISTIQLAL HAS MADE

PRO FORMA CLAIMS ON THE CANARIES OVER THE YEARS, BUT ITS CLAIMS HAVE ALSO INCLUDED MAURITANIA, MUCH OF ALGIERS, AND EVEN PARTS OF MALI, AS WELL AS ALL OF THE SAHARA. IN PRACTICE, THE PARTY DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN IDEOLOGY AND REALITY AND HAS HAD LITTLE DIFFICULTY, FOR EXAMPLE, IN ACQUIESCING IN THE RECENT TRI-PARTITE ACCORD CEDING SOME OF THE SAHARA TO MAURITANIA. KING DID NOT ADDRESS CANARIES ISSUE WHEN ASKED TO DO SO AT HIS NOV. 25 PRESS CONFERENCE, BUT HIS FACIAL EXPRESSION AND EXCLAMATIONS SIGNALLED TO MOST OBSERVERS THAT HE FOUND THE QUESTION SO EXTRANEIOUS THAT IT DID NOT MERIT AN ANSWER. MORE RECENTLY, GOM'S GOVERNOR IN THE SAHARA, AHMED BENSOUDA, WAS QUOTED IN SPANISH PRESS DEC 8 AS SAYING THAT THE GOM HAD NEVER "FORMALLY" PRESENTED A CLAIM TO SPAIN OVER THE ISLANDS. THIS PRESUMABLY TECHNICALLY LEAVES THE MATTER OPEN FROM GOM POINT OF VIEW, BUT, WHILE WE DO NOT COMPLETELY RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A MORE ACTIVE MOROCCAN POSTURE SOMEDAY, CANARIES STRIKE US AS HAVING MUCH LESS POTENTIAL FOR BECOMING A POPULAR CAUSE THAN OTHER TERRITORIAL ISSUES. AS FOR EXISTING CANARY INDEPENDENCE GROUPS, GOM SUPPORT FOR THEM WOULD BE CONTRARY TO ANY TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OF ITS OWN. FURTHERMORE, THE FACT THAT ONE GROUP WORKS OUT OF ALGIERS IS ENOUGH IN ITSELF TO GUARANTEE GOM HOSTILITY.

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9. FRENCH-SPANISH-MOROCCAN AXIS. WE ARE MILDLY INTRIGUED WITH HASSAN'S SURFACING OF THE "AXIS" CONCEPT AND HIS NEW "VERTICAL" (I.E., NORTH-SOUTH) EMPHASIS IN MOROCCO'S FOREIGN RELATIONS. AT FIRST GLANCE, THIS AMBITIOUS AND AS YET RATHER ABSTRACT IDEA WOULD SEEM TO HAVE GERMINATED OUT OF CURRENT DIFFERENCES WITH ALGERIA. AT SAME TIME, IT NO DOUBT FLATTERING TO MOROCCO TO ARROGATE TO ITSELF EQUAL FOOTING WITH TWO EUROPEAN POWERS. THE DEGREE OF ANY FRENCH INSPIRATION IS UNCLEAR, BUT HASSAN WOULD PRESUMABLY NOT BE TAKING FRANCE'S NAME IN VAIN HAD HE NOT AT LEAST TRIED THE IDEA OUT ON GISCARD AND GOTTEN SOME KIND OF ENCOURAGEMENT. IN ASSESSING THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NEW MOROCCAN ALIGNMENT NORTH AND SOUTH FOR US POLICY, WE DETECT NO INCOMPATIBILITY WITH SIMULTANEOUS STRONG MOROCCAN LINKS WITH THE US. ON THE CONTRARY, AS WELL AS POSING SOME OF THE DANGERS CITED BY REFTEL. ONE POSSIBLE BENEFICIAL EFFECT HERE COULD BE TO BALANCE MOROCCO'S IDENTIFICATION WITH VARIOUS THIRD WORLD CAUSES WITH A MORE SYMPATHETIC MOROCCAN APPROACH TO THE MANY ISSUES OF CONCERN TO WESTERN EUROPE WITH WHICH WE ALSO IDENTIFY. IT COULD ALSO SERVE TO INDUCE CONTINUING MOROCCAN RESTRAINT ON THE NORTHERN ENCLAVES.

10. ON LOS MATTERS, AS REFTEL POINTS OUT, EVEN IN TIMES OF TESTY GOS-GOM RELATIONS, POLICY ON THE STRAITS HAS BEEN CLOSE. MOROCCO WILL PRESUMABLY PURSUE, IN PARALLEL WITH SPAIN, SUPPORT FOR INNOCENT PASSAGE IN THE STRAITS.

TRILOGY OR NO, MOROCCO AND SPAIN SEEM LIKELY TO CONTINUE
GENERALLY TO COLLABORATE ON LOS IN FUTURE, INCLUDING,
AS NOTED ABOVE, SEEKING TO AVOID CONFRONTATION ON CONTENTIOUS BI-
LATERAL ISSUES SUCH AS TERRITORIAL WATERS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND THE
CANARIES.

11. US ROLE. THE PROBLEMS POSED IN THE PAST BY US
MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO MOROCCO WILL NOT, AS REFTEL POINTS
OUT, AUTOMATICALLY COMPLETELY DISAPPEAR WITH RESOLUTION OF
GOS-GOM DIFFERENCES OVER THE SAHARA. ON OTHER HAND, THE
USG APPROACH TO OUR LIMITED AND STRETCHED-OUT PROGRAM
OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO NROCCO HAS, WE BELIEVE, GONE VERY
FAR TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SPANISH SENSITIVITIES. IN OUR VIEW, OUR
MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO CONTINUES TO SERVE IMPORTANT

US INTERESTS WITHIN MOROCCO AND THE REGION AS THE WHOLE.
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12. AS FOR US POSTURE TOWARD PROSPECT OF AN EVENTUAL THREE-
WAY DISPUTE AMONG FRIENDLY NATIONS OVER THE STRAITS, WE AGREE
THIS WOULD CREATE ENORMOUS DIFFICULTIES FOR THE US. WE DO NOT
SEE ANY IMMEDIATE US ACTION VIS-A-VIS MOROCCO, HOWEVER,
UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. WITH KING HASSAN'S APPARENTLY
HAVING PUT MOROCCO'S SHARE OF THE MATTER ON ICE, ANY NEW
MOVES APPEAR FOR NOW TO RESIDE MAINLY IN THE EVOLVING SPANISH
SITUATION AND IN SPAIN'S RELATIONS WITH THE UK AND WESTERN
EUROPE, AN EVOLUTION WHICH MOROCCO DOES NOT SEEM CAPABLE OF
ACCELERATING IN ANY APPRECIABLE WAY.
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